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ABSTRACT

The effect that four years of college has on student personality test scores was examined at Shippensburg State College. The personality measure administered in all three Centennial Class testings was the "Runner Studies of Attitude Patterns". The 14 Runner variables are categorized as control-oriented, freedom-oriented, affiliation-oriented, and recognition-oriented. Tentative findings of the study included the following: (1) The impact of college experiences on student personality scores was clearly evident. (2) Different sets of variables seem to have had early or late impact changes. Variables changing within the first two years of college taken together suggest a receptiveness to new experience; the last two years seemed to display a sobering period. (3) Males and females experienced largely similar personality adjustments, though there were differences in intensity and significance of some variables. (4) An analysis by self-labelled political philosophy showed liberal and middle-of-the-road students followed a four-year pattern of continuous change in scores. (5) Students grouped by college curriculum also showed varying patterns of change of personality scores through college. (Author/LBH)

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REPORT ON CENTENNIAL CLASS SURVEY

FOUR YEAR TRENDS

PART II - THE RUNNER STUDY

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1975

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Report on Centennial Class Survey
Four Year Trends
Part II - The Runner Study

INTRODUCTION

The scope of this report forms a broad attempt to determine the effect that four years of college has upon student personality test scores. The personality measure administered in all three Centennial Class testings was the Runner Studies of Attitude Patterns. Ample space in previous reports has been devoted to detailed descriptions of the obtained student samples, testing procedures, and all instrumentation used.[1] Since these sources are readily available, it seems more profitable to focus attention upon the Runner Test itself and review its theoretical structure and component variables.

PERSONALITY MEASURE

For the reader unfamiliar with previous reports in this series, the use of the Runner Studies was an extension of this writer's previous study and experience with the instrument.[2] The Runner was essentially developed as a clinical-idiographic instrument. The test is composed of 121 short answer questions and 10 write-in sections which seek to focus upon the perceived life space of the individual. This individually based "phenomenological" point of view contrasts with the greater reliance upon norm group averages other personality tests display. Despite its clinical design, the Runner has been used effectively in group testing as noted in the following excerpt from the Sophomore Retest Report (P. 3).

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[1] See pp. 1-2 of Part I of this year's report, and the reports cited in the footnotes of the first page.

[2] See Sophomore Re-Test Runner Study p. 2.

"Although the Runner was not philosophically or mechanically developed for large group average assessment studies, it has performed quite well. Runner underscores the significance of this performance in his new test handbook by extensively reviewing the Shippensburg State College Freshmen Study (Runner, 1973, 105-108). He supplements this citation by acknowledging '... (the) continued work at Shippensburg State College has persuaded me that, despite its idiographic design and intent, the Runner studies of attitude patterns is useful as a test and not only as a projective device.' (p. IV)"

Variables

1. Overview

The 14 Runner variables are subdivided into four sets or classifications. The influence and locus of authority in individual decision making describes the first two classifications. Here the issue is whether outside external pressures (control oriented) or internally derived criteria (freedom oriented) form an individual's basic judgment. The second two sets of scales are called Affiliation Oriented and Recognition Oriented. Their concerns are with the relative importance an individual places upon sensitive relationships with people as contrasted with an inclination towards positions of leadership and prestige.

The variables listed below should not be viewed as separate, definable traits. In practice and interviews with respondents, it is always the profile of variables and their interaction with current circumstances that clarify interpretation.

2. Variable Code Definitions

The following variable definitions will aid in the interpretation of the results section of this report. To save space in tables and discussion, all variables will usually be referred to by their lettered abbreviations.

a. <u>Control Oriented</u>

Md: Methods Dependence -

Avoiding personal decisions by unquestioning reliance on prescribed procedures or habitual responses.

Rt: Traditional Righteousness -

Adherence to culturally designated definitions of morality and propriety.

Wa: Wariness of People -

Feelings of distrust towards others, especially strangers.

Pl: Planful Practicality -

Ordered management of personal activities with emphasis on safety, security, and efficiency.

b. Freedom Oriented

In: Intuitive Introspectiveness -

Awareness of and faith in the "goodness" of one's own insights, inspirations, hunches, and intuitions.

Re: Resistance to Social Pressure -

Willingness to stand by one's own convictions and intentions despite counter social pressure; readiness for rebellion.

T: Pleasure in Tool-Skills -

Satisfaction and tension release from hand skill and tool use activities.

Ac: Active Curiosity -

Readiness to become engrossed and fascinated by mentally challenging problems, with emphasis on new discovery.

c. Affiliation Oriented

Pc: Passive Compliance -

Avoidance of disagreeable confrontations through acquiesence or apathy.

B: Blamefulness -

Tendency to expect more personal understanding or support than others are willing to give.

Af: Need for Affectional Acceptance -

Dependence upon personally supportive, warm friendly relationships.

Pr: Feelings of Pressure -

Tendency to feel pressured or obligated to do more than one can do comfortably.

d. Recognition Oriented

Cx: Competitiveness -

Need to promote special personal prestige recognition and attract attention to oneself.

Do: Dominant Directiveness -

Willingness to direct others and activities.

BACKGROUND FOR THIS STUDY

With each succeeding re-test, the questions examined in this personality study became more complex to ask and difficult to answer. Some hint to the problem of measuring personality change over time was suggested by the issues raised in the Sophomore Re-Test Runner Study (pp. 5-8). Four frequently cited concerns were discussed, including: whether a personality test score measures the same attribute over time, is a sample collegiate population self screening; would the regression effect influence extreme scores; and how limiting to results would be the influence of test instrument variability? However adequately these questions were answered in the Sophomore Study, they are still relevant when broadening this study focus from a two-year to a

four-year analysis.

Multivariate studies are difficult to formulate theoretically, even for the skilled researcher. As a neophyte in this statistical area, I fully realize that this particular study could not have been completed without significant input from Dr. Edmund Marks, Assistant Director of Institutional Studies, Pennsylvania State University; Dr. James Carlson, Associate Professor of Educational Research, University of Pittsburgh, and Dr. Fred Hockersmith, of our own Psychology Department. The staff of the Shippensburg State College Computer Center, and especially the Assistant Director, Dr. William Gould, performed enumerable program runs and analyses.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

An initial area of interest was whether there were significant changes in each of the Runner variables during the first two and last two college years of this study. To obtain this goal, t tests for dependent groups were performed on the differences obtained for each pair of group mean scores. These significant mean difference scores form the bulk of the data reviewed in the first part of the results section.

A multivariate analysis of variance was also conducted to determine whether significant differences existed between selected student groups (sex, political philosophy, and curriculum major) on the 14 Runner variables. If the F-ratio for the multivariate test of equality of mean vectors was significant, the focus was shifted to a univariate analysis of variance. Each of the Runner variables was individually examined to determine its contribution to the significant F-ratios between the target groups.

NATURE OF THE DATA

Before the results are presented, some important clarifying points must be made. First, in the tables that follow, it should be remembered that statistical significance is more likely with increasing sample size. Therefore groups with relatively small numbers such as Library Science and Business Education must show much greater mean changes to be significant. Conversely, large sample size can provide statistical significant for marginal scores that might not reflect change in a true psychological variable. The values of N (or samples size) are worth careful scrutiny in the tables that follow.

A second point to remember is that the two matched groups of freshmen-sophomore and freshmen-senior scores do not contain exactly the same persons. The initial freshmen sample of 850 students is reduced to matched scores that vary between 300 and 400 in total numbers. Many factors contribute to this attrition: dropouts; transfer students; test absences; and blank student numbers account for most of the reduction. Since the response to the senior year re-test was over a 60 percent return rate, it is felt that a representative sample of the senior class was obtained.

Finally, it should be remembered that when the focus of an analysis is upon change or difference in scores, that is exactly what one examines: differences. What is lost is the original score level which may be very important. It is worth discovering a +.50 change between mean score testings of a variable. Determining whether the initial score was extremely high or low may highlight such a finding. Mean difference scores are a valuable aid to analysis, but the reader should be aware of the slightly narrowed vantage point from which he views the data.

RESULTS

A. Sex

1. Univariate Analysis by Mean Difference Scores Table 1

Mean Difference Scores* For Runner Variables By Sex

	Impact in First Two Years		Impact in Last Two Years	
	Females (N=257)	Males (N=130)	Females (N=214)	Males (N=92)
Md	-.33			
In			-.27	-.59
Rt	-.95	-.53		
Re	+.51	+.33		
Wa	-.43	-.62		
T	+.59	+.43		
Pl	+.35	+.30		
Ac				
Pc				
Cx			-.41	-.62
B	-.53	-.70		
Do			+.57	
Af			-.63	
Pr			-.96	-.79

* All listed scores are significant at the .05 level or beyond.

Observations -

Table #1 contains all change scores of Runner variables significant at least at the .05 level of probability. A total of 13 variables were significant in the first two years and 8 (or 38 percent of total) were significant in the last two years. Females displayed the largest declines in Rt and B and an increase in T and Re. These changes describe a rather complete picture of early college adjustment. The old ways (Rt) are questioned. The student begins to accept responsibility for his own decisions (B decreases). Also he tends to become a little more independent (Re increases) and looks for functional outlets for energy (T increases). In the first two college years, the male pattern followed the female student pattern

except their points of greatest change were the decreases in Blamefulness and Wariness.

In the junior and senior years more selective changes are seen by sex. Females showed a marked drop in need for Affectional Acceptance (Af) and an increase in willingness to direct others (Do) and the largest decrease in the table in pressure feelings (Pr). Male students shared this marked drop in Pr but their other significant decreases were in In and Cx.

Viewed in its entirety, these last two years seem to display a "sobering" period for male and female students. Feelings of pressure decrease along with inclincation to trust hunches and "fly by the seat of the pants" bravado (In decrease). The decrease in the desire to compete favorably with others (Cx) seems natural after four years of being graded and evaluated. Females follow this trend further by showing a willingness to direct others (+Do) and be less affectionately dependent upon them (-Af).

Table #1 also suggests certain variable changes shared by both male and female students tend to be "early" (first two years) or "late" (last two years) in their significant impact. Early influences would include drops in Rt, Wa, and B and increases in Re, Practical Planfulness (Pl) and T. The early changes suggest a student settles into college life by questioning past precepts and opening himself, through increased trust of others, to new ideas and productive routine.

Males and females in their last two years shared decreases in In, Cx, and Pr. Winding up the college years might indicate a perceived reduction in the competitive pressure these students feel. The decrease in Intuitive Introspection (In) might suggest a devaluing of the impulsive and undisciplined approach to life as career and job selections increase in importance.

2. Multivariate Analysis of Variance Between Groups (Sex).

No significant differences between male and female students were found on the Runner variables. These results confirm the findings of the Sophomore Re-Test (p. 11-12). Sex differences in variables that had been apparent in the freshmen year disappeared by the sophomore and senior year testings. Possible explanations for this trend include the suggestion that students completing college form a more homogeneous group. Sharp sex role distinctions seen in the freshmen year testing reflected family and high school peer group stereotypes. College experiences seem to have produced perceived attitudes among students that seem to have transcended initial sex differences.

B. Political Philosophy

1. Univariate Analysis by Mean Difference Scores Table 2

Mean Difference Scores* For Runner Variables
By Political Philosophy Self-Label

	Impact in First Two Years			Impact in Last Two Years		
	Liberal (N=140)	Middle-of-the Road (N=185)	Conserv. (N=51)	Liberal (N=101)	Middle-of-the Road (N=154)	Conserv. (N=42)
Md	-.40					
In				-.41	-.32	(-.60)*
Rt	-.90	-.95				
Re	+.40	+.30				+.55
Wa	-.35	-.68				
T	+.46	+.50	+.65			
Pl						
Ac		+.44				+(.50)*
Pc						-.93
Cx				-.40	-.49	(-.41)*
B		-.57		-.40		
Do				+.38	+.58	+(.36)*
Af					-.55	-.81
Pr				-1.06	-.81	-.81

* Bracket scores are marginally insignificant statistically because of insufficient sample size (N) in the conservative student group. The reason for their inclusion is discussed below.

Observations -

Perhaps the most impressive initial finding is that 54 percent of significant change (14 of 26 significant scores) occurred during the last two years of college. Conventional wisdom has always asserted that the first two years of college is the most change-inducing period for student personality.[3] This study suggests much change is occurring after that time.

The Liberal and Middle-of-the-Road student groups display similar patterns of score changes with some exceptions. Both show a decrease in Rt and Wa and increases in Re and T. These trends parallel the findings for the shared male and female patterns reviewed in the previous section. Unique to the liberal group was the decrease in methodological dependence (Md), and for the Middle-of-the-Road students there was a decrease in Blamefulness (B) and the only significant increase in Active Curiosity (Ac) in the table.

During the junior and senior years the Liberal and Middle-of-the-Road categories jointly showed decreases in Intuitive Introspection (In), Competitiveness (Cx), and Pressure Feelings (Pr), along with an increase in Dominant Directiveness (D). The four year pattern of significant scores seem to be equally distributed between the two year periods for the Liberal and Middle-of-the-Road groups. The impact college has upon these students seems to occur early and is a continuous process throughout their four years at Shippensburg.

The impact college has upon self-labelled conservative students seems to occur much later than the other two groups. Only one significant score (T+) occurs in the first two years. In the last two years, significant decreases are

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[3] See Beach, L. R., "Personality Change in the Church-Related Liberal Arts College", Psychological Reports, 1966, 19, p. 1258, and Mulford, C. L., "Self-Actualization in a Small College Environment", Journal of College Student Personnel, Vol. 8, 1967, p. 101.

seen in Passive Compliance (Pc), Need for Affectional Acceptance (Af) and Pressure Feelings (Pr) accompanied by an increase in Resistance to Social Pressure (Re). Because of the relatively small sample size for this group, four more difference scores just missed being significant. But the direction of change for three of them (In, Do, Cx) follows the trend of the other groups. The conservative group also shows a tendency towards a significant increase in Active Curiosity (Ac). The portrait of change for the conservative student depicts growing independence of mind and less emotional dependence upon others.

To summarize, there seems to be two findings worth emphasizing from this section.

1. The impact college has upon liberal and middle-of-the-road student personalities is a process that doesn't end after the second year. Important personality changes appear equally distributed throughout their four years at college.

2. For conservative self-labelled students, the effects of college is seen much later upon their personality test scores. This could mean that two year institutions like community colleges might leave these students relatively unaffected. For the conservative student alone, the maturational adjustment of attitudes is a process that is apparently postponed until the junior and senior years of college.

2. Multivariate Analysis of Variance Between Groups (Political Philosophy).

The multivariate test of equality of mean vectors produced an F-ratio significant at the .05 level or probability for the freshmen to senior year difference scores. There was a significant difference between the three political philosophy self-labelled groups on the combined Runner variables. A univariate analysis produced the following five variables ranked in decreasing order of statistical significance.

Chart 1

Variable	Mean Square	Univariate F	Probability Level
Traditional Righteousness	22.32	4.47	.01
Wariness	11.07	3.48	.03
Resistance to Social Pressure	10.42	2.68	.07
Methodological Dependence	5.02	2.37	.10
Passive Compliance	13.58	2.05	.13

Observations -

Although only the first two variables are significant beyond the .05 level, the last three support the implied interpretation. If the three groups differ in political philosophy, it seems logical to expect the significant variables to be those dealing with reactions to authority. Whether authority is seen as past tradition (Rt) or routine (Md), or some influence that must be resisted (Re) or complied with (Pc), a determining factor in reacting to this influence would be the amount of perceived trust (Wa) in its intentions. The results suggest the Runner variables were sensitive enough to detect important attitude differences between philosophically separated student sub-groups.

C. College Curriculum

1. Univariate Analysis by Mean Difference Scores

Table 3

Mean Difference Scores* for Runner Variables by College Curriculum

Major Change Indicated by Sophomore Year

Variable	Business Ed. N=18	Elem. Ed. N=144	Lib. Sci. N=14	Sec. Ed. N=71	Arts & Sci. N=71	Bus. Admin. N=37
Md			-.71		-.55	
Rt	-1.5	-1.09		-.45	-.99	-.65
Re		+ .73			+.65	
Wa		-.63		-.50	- .65	
T		+ .86			+.73	
Pl				-.50	-.49	
Ac		+.53				
Pc	+1.67					
B	-.83	-.41		-.60	-.72	-.68

*All scores are significant at the 0.05 level or beyond.

Table 4

Mean Difference Scores* for Runner Variables by College Curriculum

Major Change Indicated During Junior and Senior Years

Variable	Business Ed. N=18	Elem. Ed. N=144	Lib. Sci. N=14	Sec. Ed. N=71	Arts & Sci. N=71	Bus. Admin. N=37
Md.		-.31				
In						-.96
T	+.71					
Pl						+.71
Pc		-.41	+.92			
Cx		-.62			-.71	
Do		+.49	+1.08	+.46		
Af		-.76				
Pr		-1.14	-.76		-1.15	

*All scores are significant at the 0.05 level or beyond.

Observations -

Of the 38 significant difference scores, 15 or 30 percent occurred during the junior and senior years. Although Business Education, Library Science, and

and Business Administration had relatively small samples of students, each major produced four significant variables in its column in Table 4. Three curriculum areas, Arts & Sciences, Secondary Education, and Business Education show most of their significant difference scores during the freshman-sophomore years. The effect of their undergraduate experience upon student personalities seems to occur early in their college years for these majors. In contrast, Library Science majors show three of their four significant variables occuring later in their junior and senior years.

The pattern of variables significant for each major seems congruent with implied career orientation. The decrease in Practical Planfulness (Pl) for Arts & Science majors early in their college years seems as appropriate as the increase in Pl for Business Administration majors near the end of their undergraduate stay.

Focussing upon the variable side of Table 3, the most pervasive variables affecting the most curriculum groups were Traditional Righteousness, and Blamefulness. The variables that produced the highest levels of change were Pressure Feelings, Passive Compliance, and Traditional Righteousness. Passive Compliance and Practical Planfulness were the two scales that produced differential (both increase and decrease) effects upon the groups. Early impact variables were Traditional Righteousness (Rt-), Resistence to Social Pressure (Re+), Wariness (Wa-), and Blamefulness (B-). Difference scores based mainly in the junior and senior years were drawn from many variables previously discussed in sections examining political philosophy and sex effects. For this curriculum analysis late impact significance scores occurred in Pressure Feelings (Pr-), Affectional Acceptance (Af-), Dominant Directiveness (Do+) and Competitiveness (Cx-). An early openness to new experience and a later sobering preparation for career demands might account for the overall pattern of significance for these variables.

2. Multivariate Analysis of Variance Between Groups (Curriculum)

For the junior-senior year testing period, there were no significant variables that separated the curriculum groups. For the four year freshman to senior year span the multivariate test proved to be significant between group means. All Runner variables combined were able to discriminate between these curriculum majors over the four years. Looking at the contributing variables separately, the following four scales seemed the most powerful contributors to the significant (.001 level) multivariate result.

Chart 2

Variable	Mean Square	Univariate F	Probability Level
Passive Compliance	23.38	3.69	.003
Tool Use Inclination	10.82	3.55	.003
Competitiveness	15.63	3.18	.008
Practical Planfulness	9.39	2.13	.06

Observations -

The above four variables should be compared to those listed as important in the multivariate analysis of political philosophy. With one exception, there are completely different lists of variables. In the first analysis the pattern of significant scores was held together by the common theme of reaction to authority, an important dimension of political philosophy. In the present analysis the Runner scales proved sensitive in distinguishing between curriculum majors on variables thought to be important to career or job attitudes.

Through the four college years, students in these diverse majors are developing clearer and more realistic expectations about what their new jobs may be like. It would seem likely that directives from authorities might be scrupulously

followed by the neophyte teacher, but in other fields such suggested influence might rankle (Pc). The amount of required technical skill and facility with equipment and machines (T) would be clearly an inherent part of job appeal. There is evident concern for how much advancement in position may require constant pressure to come off well in comparison to others (Cx). Finally, the likelihood of encountering a secure, ordered, and efficient use of daily activity (Pi) might be a vital criterion for a life-long career decision. In summary, the logical pattern of these significant variables suggest the Runner Scales detected real attitude differences between the students in varied major fields.

SUMMARY

The following points represent a non-technical summary of the tentative findings from personality testing using the Runner Studies of Attitude Patterns over the four years of the survey. The reader should keep in mind that the following statements represent suggested hypotheses for further investigation and statistical analysis. At this early stage of study they cannot be treated as definitive conclusions.

1. The impact of college experiences upon student personality scores was clearly evident. In view of current widespread discussion of the value of attending college for today's youth, this finding is highly relevant. Much of the previous research dealing with undergraduate attitude change suggests that the impact of college is essentially completed by the end of the sophomore year. This Centennial Class study suggests that the process of adjustment and change could continue throughout the entire four year undergraduate period.

2. Different sets of variables seem to have had early or late impact changes. Variables changing within the first two years of college taken together suggest a receptiveness to new experience on the part of the undergraduates. Variable changes supporting this trend included the following: a decrease in Wariness of others; a decrease in Traditional Righteousness; an increase in Resistence to Social Pressure; and a decrease in self Blamefulness.

   In comparison, the last two years seemed to display a "sobering" period for male and female students. As graduation became more imminent, Feelings of Pressure decreased, along with the inclination to trust one's hunches and inspirations (Intuitive Introspectiveness). The decrease in the desire to compete favorably with others (Competitiveness) seemed natural after four years of being graded and evaluated. Females followed this trend further by showing an increase in Dominant Directiveness, the willingness to direct others, and a decrease in Affectional Acceptance, the need for affectional reassurance from people.

3. Males and females experienced largely similar personality adjustments, though there were differences in intensity and significance of some variables. Strong differences in personality scores between sexes, so apparent in the freshmen year results, had disappeared by the sophomore year and remained insignificant through graduation.

4. An analysis by self-labelled political philosophy showed liberal and middle-of-the-road students followed a four year pattern of continuous change in scores. Conservative self-labelled students seemed to be affected by college much later in their undergraduate career. These results seem to suggest it would be extremely important for conservatively-oriented students to complete a four year college experience. Two years of post high school study might not have any substantial impact upon a conservative student's original perceptions and attitudes.

5. Students grouped by college curriculum also showed varying patterns of change of personality scores through college. Majors in Arts & Sciences, Secondary Education, and Business Education experienced early changes, while the impact upon Library Science majors was not obvious until much later.

Further Studies

There is much work left to be finished with the Centennial Class data. When a suitable presentation is organized, a workshop-seminar of colleagues and interested graduate students will be conducted by this writer. The intent will be to present an overview of the findings and brainstorm ideas for future study and research that might be drawn from this significant data bank. The goal of this session is to promote cross-disciplinary research by inviting representatives from diverse departments and administrative positions. It is hoped such a mixture might generate new questions future studies might investigate.

A current goal is to complete the testing of Dickinson College's current senior class with the Runner Studies. Dr. Howard Figler, Director of Counseling

and Placement at Dickinson College is cooperating in this study. The purpose of this investigation is to determine whether the impact of college has differing effects upon the personalities of Shippensburg students compared to Dickinson students.

A final area of future interest is to determine whether significant personality differences exist between those students who complete and those students who do not complete their college studies. In light of much current debate about the value of a college education, it seems worth examining this issue immediately. Specifically, it seems important to see whether self-labelled conservative students experienced the personality changes that were later experienced by their conservative student peers who remained in school to graduate.

In a real sense, the work on this Centennial Class Survey has just begun. The fact that it has been completed to this point is a result of the solid interest and support received from so many students, academic, and administrative colleagues. I hope the results of these efforts can significantly contribute to increased understanding of our present and future students. This original intent was the spark of interest that kindled these studies, and it is a flame I still see burning brightly.

CENTENNIAL CLASS SURVEY REPORTS

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